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**Mother Mentor:
A Tribute to Carolyn Ellis¹**

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A Tribute to Carolyn Ellis**

It was 1993--early November.
 Not yet an ethnographer,
 but still, I remember
 my other mentor,
 Art Bochner,
 said, "Meet my partner,
 Carolyn."

 CDB Pizzeria,
 eating my first fried green tomato
 (how prophetic),
 I met her.

 I had heard rumors.
 "She'll open your doors."
 "Be prepared to explore."
 "You should have known Art before:
 contentious, even testy.
 We call that period 'B.C.'—
 Before Carolyn."

I beheld
 her resplendent ensemble:
 native print, vivid colors,
 crowned at the ears
 by gemstone and silver.

Her face, framed by soft curls,
 was more supple and maternal
 than I expected.

 She took my hand in hers,
 a touch that soothed and foreshadowed.
 "I feel like I know you,"
 said Carolyn.

In thick descriptions
 of mothers,
 brothers,
 lovers
 and Others,
 loves beginning,
 lives ending,
 hearts breaking
 and mending, her words testify that indeed,
 "There are survivors."¹¹

She has her critics
 who sling their polemics:
 "Soft, touchy feely."
 "Promotes victimology."
 "Who stole sociology?"

But beware those who wage
 discursive war on this sage.
 They emerge in her pages, crusty barnacles
 for the next article
 by Carolyn Ellis.

So many layers:
 teacher,
 nurturer,
 caretaker,
 lover of my second father,
 garden sower,
 dance master,
 prolific writer,
 fire walker,
 gentle spirit,
 tender of secrets,
 mother mentor:
 Carolyn Ellis.

¹¹Ellis, C. (1993). "There are survivors": Telling a story of sudden death. *Sociological Quarterly*, 34, 711-730.